

A server architecture for a digital rights management system that distributes and protects rights in content. The server architecture includes a retail site which sells content items to consumers, a fulfillment site which provides to consumers the content items sold by the retail site, and an activation site which enables consumer reading devices to use content items having an enhanced level of copy protection. Each retail site is equipped with a URL encryption object, which encrypts, according to a secret symmetric key shared between the retail site and the fulfillment site, information that is needed by the fulfillment site to process an order for content sold by the retail site. Upon selling a content item, the retail site transmits to the purchaser a web page having a link to a URL comprising the address of the fulfillment site and a parameter having the encrypted information. Upon following the link, the fulfillment site downloads the ordered content to the consumer, preparing the content if necessary in accordance with the type of security to be carried with the content. The fulfillment site includes an asynchronous fulfillment pipeline which logs information about processed transactions using a store-and-forward messaging service. The fulfillment site may be implemented as several server devices, each having a cache which stores frequently downloaded content items, in which case the asynchronous fulfillment pipeline may also be used to invalidate the cache if a change is made at one server that affects the cached content items. An activation site provides an activation certificate and a secure repository executable to consumer content-rendering devices which enables those content rendering devices to render content having an enhanced level of copy-resistance. The activation site “activates” client-reading devices in a way that binds them to a persona, and limits the number of devices that may be activated for a particular persona, or the rate at which such devices may be activated for a particular persona.